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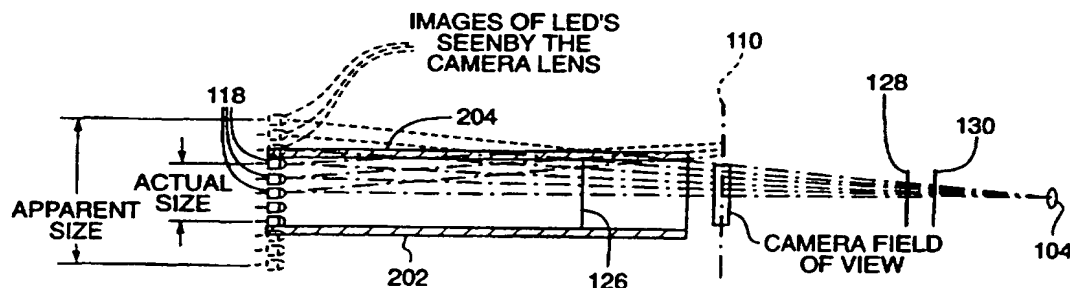
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(54) Title: ILLUMINATION SYSTEM FOR OCR OF INDICIA ON A SUBSTRATE



(57) Abstract

An illumination system (10, 40, 74, 100) is provided having one or more light sources (24, 26), opaque baffles (30, 32), and mirrors (50, 64, 66) for illuminating indicia on a substrate, such as a semiconductor wafer (18), for viewing by a camera (12, 42) aligned parallel to or at an angle (14) to the substrate. The light sources (24, 26) include light emitting diodes for illuminating soft marks and broad spectrum incandescent lamps for illuminating hard marks. Dark field and light field illuminators are provided for enhanced reading of light indicia on a dark background and dark indicia on a light background, respectively. A light control unit (158) allows for manual or automated control of light source selection and light intensity. Opposing mirrors extending along the optical paths of the light sources reflect light emitted from the light sources into the camera's field of view, thereby increasing the illumination efficiency and permitting the use of fewer light sources.

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ILLUMINATION SYSTEM FOR OCR OF INDICIA ON A SUBSTRATE

Technical Field

15 The instant invention is drawn to the field of optics and, more particularly, to an LED illumination system for optical character recognition of indicia on a substrate.

Background of the Invention

20 Semiconductor wafers and other substrates may be provided with indicia that indicate, among other things, wafer number and manufacturer. The indicia may be, for example, 5/8 to 3/4 inches in length (1.59-1.91 cm) and are typically constituted as a matrix of laser-etched pits.

25 The difficulties in providing machine reading of such laser-etched indicia on semiconductor wafers arise from the fact that the characters themselves are the same color as their wafer substrates and show little relief; from the fact that the wafer surface is polished, so that it reflects the light used to read the characters; and from the fact that the surface of the wafer may undergo several coating processes that cover the characters and reduce their size and relief.

30 The heretofore known optical character recognition (OCR) systems have utilized the small surface irregularities introduced by the indicia to reflect light to a camera. But because the dots are so smooth, they disperse light only through a small angle and, in some instances, extremely small angles. As a result, the source

of the light must be at a very small angle from the line of sight and it must be relatively intense. This places the source in the camera's field of view and the result is, in many instances, that the camera is blinded. While prior art techniques that use beam splitters to direct light along the line of sight have been utilized, these techniques have not been robust enough to illuminate small characters with many overcoat layers. High intensity fiber optic light sources represent another prior art technique that, while providing very intense light which functions at greater angles and illuminates even the most difficult characters, is subject to the considerable disadvantages of being expensive and large, and generating unwanted heat and vibration.

Summary of the Invention

Accordingly, it is the principal object of the present invention to provide a robust, but inexpensive, light emitting diode (LED) illumination system for optical character recognition of indicia on a substrate, even when the characters have been overcoated with one or more layers.

In accord therewith, and in one embodiment, a camera having a field of view that is angled at a first acute angle to a normal to the substrate is provided for reading the indicia thereon within its field of view. First and second arrays of LEDs each defining optical paths that are respectively disposed to either side of a second acute angle to the normal to the substrate, where the second acute angle is the same in magnitude as the first acute angle but lies on the other side of the normal, are provided for illuminating the indicia on the substrate. First and second baffles respectively disposed along the optical paths of the first and second arrays of LEDs are provided to occlude the respective LED arrays and thereby prevent them from being imaged within the field of view of the camera while allowing the indicia to be read by the camera in the light of the LED arrays.

In further accord therewith, and in another embodiment, a camera having a field of view that is oriented with its long axis in parallel relation with a normal to the substrate is provided for reading the indicia thereon within its field of view. An optical member optically confronting both the camera and the substrate is provided for deviating light incident thereto to and toward the camera. The optical member

may be a plane mirror angled to confront both the camera and the substrate; a double plane mirror, a first mirror member of which is angled to confront the substrate and a second mirror member of which is angled to confront both the camera and the first mirror member; or a prism. First and second arrays of LEDs
5 defining optical paths that are respectively disposed to either side of an acute angle defined with respect to a normal to the substrate are provided for illuminating the indicia on the substrate. First and second baffles, respectively disposed along the optical paths of the first and second arrays of LEDs, are provided to occlude the respective LED arrays and thereby prevent them from being imaged within the field
10 of view of the camera while allowing the indicia to be read by the camera in the light of the LED arrays.

In these embodiments, the LED arrays may include one lens, multiple lenses, or no lens. Additionally, a mask may be provided in the nearfield of the LED arrays to allow placing comparatively large and readily available LEDs closer
15 to the substrate without imaging them within the camera's field of view, while reducing overall package size.

In still another embodiment, a camera having a field of view that is oriented with its longitudinal axis in perpendicular relation with a normal to the substrate is provided for reading the indicia thereon within its field of view. A plurality of
20 optical elements is arranged so that one of the elements confronts first and second arrays of LEDs to direct light emanating therefrom between baffles arranged to occlude the lamp arrays from other optical elements and thenceforth to other elements, one of which confronts the camera, thereby allowing it to read the indicia by the lamp light.

In yet another embodiment, specially configured for reading both soft and hard mark scribes, a camera having a field of view that is oriented with its longitudinal axis in perpendicular relation with a normal to the substrate is provided for reading the indicia thereon within its field of view. A plurality of optical
25 elements is arranged so that one of the elements confronts first and second arrays of LEDs to direct light emanating therefrom between baffles arranged to occlude the
30 LED arrays from other optical elements and thenceforth to other elements, one of

which confronts the camera, thereby allowing it to read the indicia by the LED light. Additionally, this embodiment includes two supplemental illumination modes for reading hard markings.

5 The first additional mode is dark field illumination and consists of an array of incandescent lamps mounted near the indicia on the substrate, but out of the camera's field of view.

10 The second mode is bright field illumination and consists of a diffuse, preferably white, reflector located in the camera's field of view that is illuminated by first and second arrays of incandescent lamps proximate thereto but hidden from the camera's view. The reflector is mounted between the first and second arrays of LEDs and in front of the mask used for soft mark illumination. The lamp arrays are placed adjacent to the LED arrays in a manner to provide uniform illumination of the reflector. The reflector is limited in size to that just sufficient to provide a bright background for the scribe window. All other light is blocked from the wafer and the camera's view by lamp housings and the baffles utilized for soft mark illumination. Minimizing the size of the reflector and blocking all other light from the wafer maximizes the contrast between the polished wafer surface, which reflects a clear image of the bright reflector, and the scribe marks, which scatter the light and thus appear dark. If the reflector were larger than the scribe window or if stray light from the lamps were allowed to illuminate the wafer, then the image contrast would be diminished due to the additional light scattered from the scribes entering the camera and making them appear brighter.

20 The invention provides a multi-channel light control unit controlling four illumination sources responsive to operator input and control logic for selecting an appropriate source and intensity of illumination to provide enhanced viewing of a variety of scribes. The control unit can be either hard-wired or include user programmable software that can adjust the illumination sources in response to camera feedback.

25 In still another embodiment, the optical paths defined by the illumination sources are bounded on either side by planar mirrors. The planar mirrors reflect light from the illumination sources into the camera field of view that would

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otherwise fall outside the field of view. The mirrors allow the width of the light source to be reduced by utilizing light that would otherwise be lost. Thus, fewer LEDs or incandescent bulbs are required to illuminate the same field of view. This results in a significantly narrower light source and a reduction in the required number of LEDs and bulbs.

Brief Description of the Drawings

These and other objects, features and advantages of the present invention will become apparent upon reference to the following detailed description of the preferred embodiments and to the drawings wherein:

Fig. 1 is a partly pictorial, partly sectional diagram illustrating one embodiment of the robust LED illumination system for OCR of indicia on a substrate in accord with the present invention;

Fig. 2 is a partly pictorial, partly sectional diagram illustrating another embodiment of the robust LED illumination system for OCR of indicia on a substrate in accord with the present invention;

Figs. 3A and 3B (collectively Fig. 3) are sectional diagrams illustrating alternative optical members useful in the Fig. 2 embodiment of the robust LED illuminator system for OCR of indicia on a substrate in accord with the present invention;

Fig. 4 is a partly pictorial, partly sectional diagram illustrating another embodiment of an illumination system for OCR of indicia on a substrate in accord with the present invention;

Fig. 5 is a partly pictorial, partly sectional diagram illustrating yet another embodiment of the illumination system for OCR of indicia on a substrate;

Fig. 6 is a sectional view of the illumination system of Fig. 5, taken along line 5-5;

Fig. 7 is a schematic of an illumination system of the invention;

Fig. 8 is a partly pictorial, partly sectional diagram illustrating another embodiment of the illumination system of Fig. 5;

Fig. 9 is a sectional view of the illumination system of Fig. 8, taken along line 9-9; and

Fig. 10 is a sectional view of the unfolded optical path of the illumination system of Fig. 8.

Detailed Description of Preferred Embodiment

Fig. 1 is a schematic diagram illustrating one embodiment of the robust LED illumination system 10 for optical character recognition (OCR) of indicia (such as laser-etched character strings) on a substrate (such as semiconductor wafers). A camera 12 is provided at an acute angle marked " Θ_c " and generally designated by arrow 14 that is defined with respect to a normal 16 to a semiconductor wafer 18. The camera 12 has a lens 20 that has a field of view that reads indicia, schematically illustrated by arrows 22, on the wafer 18.

First and second arrays of LEDs, each of which are evenly distributed across the full width of the camera's field of view, are respectively disposed to either side of a second acute angle marked " Θ_L " and generally designated by arrow 28. The angle of the acute angle 28 is the same in magnitude as that of the angle of the acute angle 14, but the second acute angle is to the other side of the normal 16 to the substrate 18. Each of the LEDs of the LED arrays 24 and 26 preferably are lensed, although unlensed LEDs together with separate cylindrical lenses may be provided as well. The number of LEDs is selected to provide robust illumination of the indicia 22 on the substrate 18. They are each arrayed in linear alignment to conform to the typically linear arrangement of the indicia 22. Other patterns are possible.

LED arrays 24 and 26 provide optical paths along which their respective light beams illuminate the indicia on the substrate, one to either side thereof. Along the optical path of the array 24, an opaque baffle 30 is disposed; and along the optical path of the LED array 26, an opaque baffle 32 is disposed; the baffles 30 and 32 are spaced apart a preselected distance. The baffle 30, which may be any opaque material such as aluminum, is oriented such that its normal is orthogonal to the normal 16 to the wafer 18, and the baffle 32 is oriented such that its normal is parallel to the normal 16 to the substrate 18. Other orientations of baffles 30 and 32 are possible so long as the direct images of the corresponding arrays are occluded by the corresponding baffle from being imaged off the specular surface of

the substrate 18 and thereby picked up by the field of view of the lens 20 of the camera 12 while allowing the indicia 22 to be read therefrom in the light of the illumination provided by the LED arrays 24 and 26.

Fig. 2 illustrates another embodiment of the robust LED illumination system 40 for OCR of indicia on a substrate in accord with the present invention. The system 40 of Fig. 2 differs from the system 10 of Fig. 1 in two principal respects. The first respect is that the camera 42 having the lens 44 providing a field of view is mounted with the axis of the camera generally parallel to the normal 46 to the substrate 48; and, an optical member 50, such as a planar mirror, is disposed within the field of view of the lens 44 of the camera 42 at a preselected acute angle. The angle at which the mirror is oriented within the field of view of the lens 44 is selected to deviate light reflected off the surface of the wafer 48 into the lens 44 of the camera 42, while allowing the camera 42 to be in the vertical position illustrated. The vertical orientation of the camera, among other advantages, enables a reduction in package size and simplifies mounting.

The second respect in which the system 40 of Fig. 2 differs from that of the system 10 of Fig. 1 is that a mask 54 having a rectangular shape is provided in the nearfield of the LED arrays 58 and 60. The mask 54 allows placing large LEDs, which are readily commercially available, much closer to the substrate 48, typically a semiconductor wafer, without their being visible within the camera's field of view.

In this embodiment, the individual LEDs of the LED arrays 58 and 60 are preferably lensed, although cylindrical lenses may be added to unlensed LEDs to provide more uniform illumination along the optical paths of the LEDs of the LED arrays.

As seen in Fig. 3A, a double plane mirror generally designated 62 may be provided in place of the plane mirror 50 (Fig. 2) to deviate light reflected off the substrate to the camera. A first planar mirror member 64 thereof is angled to confront the substrate and a second planar mirror member 66 thereof is angled to confront both the mirror member 64 and the camera. The double reflections thereof present a true image of the indicia to be read.

As seen in Fig. 3B, a prism generally designated 68 may be provided in place of the plane mirror 50 to deviate light reflected off the substrate to the camera. The prism 68 has silvered surfaces 70 and 72 that function as the members 64 and 66 (Fig. 3A) function to image the substrate within the field of view of the camera.

In addition to overcoming the difficulties in reading characters that are overcoated, an OCR system can be faced with the challenge of reading characters that have been created by any of a variety of marking means that form marks having distinctive characteristics. One method of creating indicia on a substrate is with a laser. Depending on the laser technique, the marks produced thereby can be "soft" marks, characterized by shallow depressions in the wafer with smooth, curved edges, or "hard" marks, which are more crater-like with very sharp edges and a jagged rim at the wafer surface.

Fig. 4 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention, illumination system 74. The system 74 of Fig. 4 differs from the system 40 of Fig. 2 in two respects. The first is that a camera 76, having a lens 78, is mounted so that the axis of the camera 76 is generally perpendicular to the normal to a specular substrate 80. The second respect in which system 74 of Fig. 4 differs from system 40 of Fig. 2 is that a light source 82, such as an LED array, is also positioned with its axis generally perpendicular to the normal to the substrate 80. The horizontal placement of the camera 76 and light source 82 advantageously minimizes the overall height of the package, while providing convenient access to the camera 76 and lens 78 during installation and adjustment operations.

The light source 82 is provided with a rectangular mask 84 in the nearfield of the light source, as described with respect to the system of Fig. 2. The mask 84 and light source 82 are located within an enclosure 86 that also houses a first mirror 88, a second mirror 90, a third mirror 92, a first baffle 94, and a second baffle 96. The second and third mirrors, 90 and 92 respectively, can be replaced with a prism as illustrated in Fig. 3B. The enclosure 86 further includes a first opening 98, or scribe window, alignable with the marks to be read on the substrate 80, a second opening 99 with which the camera 76 is aligned to receive light reflected from the

substrate 80, and mirrors 88, 90, and 92. The camera 76 is affixed to the enclosure 86 with an adjustable mounting bracket for refining the alignment of the camera 76 and lens 78 with the second opening 99.

5 The first planar mirror 88 is angled to confront the light source 82 and the substrate 80 so that the light striking the substrate 80 does not do so perpendicularly but at an angle. The first and second baffles, 94 and 96 respectively, are provided to control passage of light from the first mirror 88 to the substrate 80 for illuminating the substrate and the marks thereon. Light, reflected from the substrate 80 at a complimentary aspect angle to that received from the first mirror 88 passes
10 on the side the second baffle 96 opposite the light source 82 to the second planar mirror 90 confronting the substrate 80. The second planar mirror 90 confronting the third planar mirror 92 reflects the light received from the substrate 80 to the third mirror 92, which is angled to confront the camera lens 78. Light, reflecting from the third mirror 92, passes through the second opening 99 in the enclosure 86
15 and thus through the lens 78 and into the camera 76.

The size of the field of view is a function of the optical magnification of a selected lens 78, the physical size of the optical elements, and the size of an optional extension tube 79. In one embodiment, an extension tube 35 millimeters long is used for a 75-millimeter lens and a 10-millimeter extension tube is used with
20 a 50-millimeter lens. For example, a field of view approximately 1.30 inches (33 mm) wide is provided for a 50-millimeter lens 78 having a nominal magnification of 0.25 and a camera 76 with a 6.6 x 8.8 millimeter charge-coupled device (CCD). If, however, the illustrated system 74 is configured with a 75-millimeter lens 78 operating at 0.50 magnification, the size of the field of view is reduced to 0.65
25 inches (16.5 mm). A field of view this size is appropriate for viewing small (0.8 millimeter tall) scribes. Modification of the extension tube 79 and camera mounting position allow small adjustments (approximately +/- 10%) to be made to the magnification. Cameras with different size CCD, lenses of different focal lengths, and extension tubes of different lengths may be employed to obtain other
30 magnifications. Those familiar with cameras and lenses can select the combination to provide the magnification best suited for a particular application.

Fig. 5 illustrates another embodiment of the present invention. With reference to Fig. 5, an OCR system 100 has a camera 102 with a 75-millimeter lens 104, an extension tube 103, a first light system 106, and a second light system 108 aligned parallel to a marked substrate 110. This embodiment includes LEDs for reading "soft" marks and broad spectrum incandescent lamps for reading "hard" marks. An enclosure 112 having a mounting bracket 114 for the camera 102 is provided for housing the light systems and a four-channel light control unit 116 for controlling them.

Fig. 6 is a cross-sectional view of the illumination system of Fig. 5, which should be referred to in conjunction with Fig. 5 with regard to the following description. In the illustrated embodiment, the first light system 106 includes four rows of LEDs 118, wherein two rows are above the field of view of the camera 102 and two rows are below its field of view. The centermost or innermost two rows comprise a first array of LEDs 118 that are controlled by a first channel of the light control unit 116. The LEDs 118 of the outermost two rows comprise a second array of LEDs 118 that are independently controllable from the first array by a second channel of the light control unit 116. In the illustrated embodiment, each of the innermost rows includes nine LEDs 118 and each of the outermost rows includes eight LEDs 118.

The first light system 106 also provides for enhanced illumination of dark characters or scribes on a lightly colored background, known as bright field illumination. The bright field illumination components include two arrays of incandescent bright field lamps 120, responsive to a third channel of the light control unit 116, mounted near the LEDs 118 in light reflective housings. The bright field lamps 120 illuminate a highly reflective, lightly colored target 122, typically white, that is in the camera's field of view via the mirror arrangement.

The second light system 108 includes an array of incandescent lamps 124 for illuminating brightly colored characters on a dark (black) background, known as dark field illumination. In the illustrated embodiment, there are six dark field lamps 124, responsive to a fourth channel of the light control unit 116, located in a

light reflective housing. These lamps illuminate the substrate 110 and are not within the camera's field of view.

5 The incandescent dark field and light field lamps are standard, miniature, clear, white-light bulbs that are preferably operated at reduced voltage to extend their life, which is on the order of 20,000 or more hours. For the present application, incandescent lamps provide advantages over LEDs because they emit a broader spectrum of wavelengths, ranging from the visible well into the infrared spectrum, and are much less sensitive to interference effects that result from the thin coatings found on substrates 110 such as processed wafers. The incandescent bulbs
10 also produce less heat than a fluorescent lamp (fluorescent lamps have "heaters" to produce the electrons necessary for the plasma discharge) and have the advantage of being easy to control in addition to their small size. Furthermore, the incandescent bulbs have electrical power requirements similar to the LEDs 118 that are used for illuminating soft markings, so they are controlled by the same electronics and
15 software.

Otherwise, the mirror and baffle arrangement, including a first mirror 126, a second mirror 128, a third mirror 130, a first baffle 132, and a second baffle 134 are the same as with respect to Fig. 4. An optical path 115 is shown from the substrate 110 to the second mirror 128.

20 In each of the embodiments, the light control unit 116 controls the illumination of the substrate for optimal character resolution under a variety of viewing conditions presented by particular scribes. In one embodiment of the system 100, the light control unit 116 receives feedback from the camera 102 to automatically adjust the source and intensity of light with software-controlled
25 switching.

An exemplary light control unit 126 for the system 124 of Fig. 5 is illustrated schematically in Fig. 7, for control of four illumination sources A, B, C, and D, labeled 146, 148, 150, and 152 respectively, to correspond to inner rows of LEDs 118, the outer rows of LEDs 118, bright field lamps 120, and dark field
30 lamps 124. A system operator selects a source and intensity of light using source select and intensity select controls 154 and 156, respectively. Control logic 158 is

either in the form of hard wiring or software that allows a user to define both the light type and intensity by selecting appropriate commands. Accordingly, the system requires virtually no mechanical adjustment beyond initial setup for reading a wide variety of marks.

5 Referring now to Figs. 8 and 9 in conjunction, another embodiment of the OCR system is illustrated. Fig. 9 is a partial cross-sectional view of the embodiment shown in Fig. 8 taken along line 9-9. The embodiment illustrated in Figs. 8 and 9 includes a camera 102 with a 75-millimeter lens 104, an extension tube 103, a first light system 106, and a second light system 108 aligned parallel to
10 a marked substrate 110. This embodiment includes LEDs for reading "soft" marks and broad spectrum incandescent lamps for reading "hard" marks. An enclosure 112 having a mounting bracket 114 for the camera 102 is provided for housing the light systems and a four-channel light control unit 116 for controlling them. In addition, this embodiment includes a first and second plane or light source mirrors
15 202 and 204 to reflect light emitted from the light sources toward the camera field of view on the substrate 110, thereby allowing fewer LEDs and incandescent lamps to be used while achieving substantially equivalent illumination at the substrate in a much narrower package.

The first and second light source mirrors, 202 and 204 respectively, extend
20 from a point outboard the light system 106, to a point proximate the baffles 132 and 134. Light emitted from the LED arrays is reflected by the first and second light source mirrors, 202 and 204 respectively, toward the first mirror 126, which reflects the light to the substrate 110, thereby increasing the effective light intensity at the substrate. Similarly, the bright field lamps 120 emit light that is reflected by
25 target 122 and then by the first and second light source mirrors, 202 and 204 respectively, toward the first mirror 126, which reflects light to the substrate 110. As shown in the embodiment depicted in Fig. 9, the width of the enclosure 112 can be reduced significantly because fewer lamps and LEDs are needed. For example, whereas the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 4-6 can have a width of about 3.6
30 inches (9.1 cm), an embodiment using light source mirrors can have a housing that is 2.4 inches (6.1 cm) or less wide.

Referring now to Fig. 10, a cross-sectional view of the unfolded optical path of the embodiment of Fig. 8 is shown. Fig. 10 is an exemplary depiction of emitted light from the innermost row of LEDs 118, being reflected by the second light source mirror 204 toward the substrate 110 and into the camera field of view. Although not shown, light is similarly reflected by the first light source mirror 202. Light from the LEDs 118, which would otherwise fall outside the camera field of view, is reflected by the first and second light source mirrors, 202 and 204 respectively, towards the first mirror 126 and then toward the camera field of view on the substrate 110, thus increasing the effective illumination. Light reflected by the first and second light source mirrors 202 and 204 respectively, replaces light that would be emitted from LEDs in a wider LED array. It is readily appreciable to one skilled in the art that light from the outermost rows of LEDs 118 is reflected in an analogous manner. Similarly, light emitted from the target 122 and incandescent lamps 124 is reflected by the first and second light source mirrors, 202 and 204 respectively, toward the camera field of view of the substrate 110.

Thus, the first and second light source mirrors, 202 and 204 respectively, provide a dramatic reduction in the width of enclosure 112 and the number of required LEDs and lamps. In the embodiment shown in Fig. 9, the innermost rows of LEDs 118 include a row of five LEDs, the outermost rows of LEDs 118 include a row of four LEDs, and the two arrays of incandescent bulbs 120 each include two bulbs. The LEDs 118 require a width of about 1.5 inches (3.8 cm). This is in contrast with the embodiment of Fig. 5 wherein the two outermost rows of nine LEDs 118 and the two innermost rows of eight LEDs 118 require a width of about 2.7 inches (6.9 cm), and the enclosure is about 3.6 inches (9.1 cm). Further, the two arrays of incandescent bulbs 120 each include three bulbs.

Many modifications of the presently disclosed invention will become apparent to those of skill in the art, having benefitted from the instant disclosure without departing from the inventive concept. For example, mirrors may be placed at the top and bottom of the enclosure 112 to reflect light toward the first mirror 126. Further, many combinations and numbers of LEDs and lamps may be used without departing from the scope and spirit of the present invention.

Claims

1. An illumination system for illuminating indicia on the surface of a substrate, comprising:

5 a light source for illuminating said indicia on the surface of a substrate, said light source defining an optical path from said light source to said substrate;

an optical member confronting said light source so as to deviate light incident thereto from said light source toward the substrate; and

a first light source mirror disposed along a portion of said optical path.

10 2. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein said first light source mirror extends from a point outboard said light source to a point proximate said optical member.

3. The illumination system of claim 1, further comprising a second light source mirror opposing said first light source mirror.

15 4. The illumination system of claim 3, wherein said first light source mirror is planar.

5. The illumination system of claim 4, wherein said first light source mirror is parallel to said second light source mirror.

20 6. The illumination system of claim 5, wherein said first light source mirror is spaced apart from said second light source mirror by a distance of about 1.5 inches.

7. The illumination system of claim 3, further comprising a camera having a field of view that includes said substrate;

25 8. The illumination system of claim 7, further comprising an enclosure that surrounds at least a portion of the optical path defined by light emitted from said light source to said camera.

9. The illumination system of claim 8, wherein said enclosure includes a first wall to which said first light source mirror is affixed and a second wall to which said second light source mirror is affixed.

30 10. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein said light source comprises a first LED array.

11. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein said light source comprises a first array of incandescent bulbs.

12. An illumination system for illuminating indicia on the surface of a substrate, comprising:

5 a light source for illuminating said indicia on the surface of a substrate, said light source defining an optical path from said light source to said substrate;

an optical member confronting said light source so as to deviate light incident thereto from said light source toward the substrate;

10 a first light source mirror disposed along a portion of said optical path and extending from a point outboard said light source to a point proximate said optical member;

a second light source mirror opposing said first light source mirror; and

15 an enclosure that surrounds at least a portion of the optical path defined by light emitted from said light source, said enclosure including a first wall to which said first light source mirror is affixed and a second wall to which said second light source mirror is affixed.

13. An illumination system for illuminating indicia on the surface of a substrate, comprising:

20 a camera having a field of view that is oriented with its longitudinal axis generally perpendicular to a normal to the substrate;

first and second arrays of light sources defining optical paths that are respectively disposed to either side of an acute angle defined with respect to a normal to the substrate for illuminating the indicia on the substrate;

25 a first optical member confronting the first and second arrays of light sources so as to deviate light incident thereto from the first and second arrays of light sources towards the substrate;

a second optical member confronting the substrate so as to deviate light incident thereto from the substrate toward a third optical member;

30 said third optical member confronting the second optical member so as to deviate light incident thereto from the second optical member toward the camera;

first and second baffles respectively disposed along the optical paths of the first and second arrays of light sources that occlude the respective arrays and thereby prevent them from being imaged onto the second and the third optical members while allowing the indicia to be imaged by the second optical member and deviated therefrom to the third optical member and thence to the camera,
5 allowing it to read the indicia; and

first and second light source mirrors extending from a point proximate said first and second arrays of light sources to a point proximate said substrate.

AMENDED CLAIMS

[received by the International Bureau on 25 March 1997 (25.03.97); original claims 1-13 amended; new claims 14-26 added; (5 pages)]

1. An illumination system for illuminating indicia on the surface of a substrate, comprising:

5 a first light system of a first type for illuminating indicia of a first type on the surface of a substrate, the first light system defining a first optical path from the first light system to the substrate and having a source width that is normal to the first optical path, the source width having an actual size;

10 a second light system of a second type for illuminating indicia of a second type, the second light system defining a second optical path from the second light system to the substrate; and

a first side mirror disposed along a portion of the first and second optical paths between the first light system and the substrate and between the second light system and the substrate, respectively, to direct a portion of the light from the first and second light systems toward the substrate, the side mirror creating an apparent size for the source width that is greater than the actual size.

2. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein the first side mirror extends from a point outboard the first and second light systems to a point proximate the optical member.

3. The illumination system of claim 1, further comprising a second side mirror opposing the first side mirror.

4. The illumination system of claim 3, wherein the first side mirror is planar.

5. The illumination system of claim 4, wherein the first side mirror is parallel to the second side mirror.

6. The illumination system of claim 5, wherein the first side mirror is spaced apart from the second side mirror by a distance of about 1.5 inches.

7. The illumination system of claim 3, further comprising a camera having a field of view that includes the substrate and has a view width that is a function of the apparent size of the source width.

8. The illumination system of claim 7, further comprising
5 an enclosure that surrounds at least a portion of a third optical path defined by light emitted from either of the first or second light systems to the camera.

9. The illumination system of claim 8, wherein the enclosure includes a first wall to which the first side mirror is affixed and a
10 second wall to which the second side mirror is affixed.

10. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein the first light system comprises an LED array or an incandescent bulb array.

11. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein the first light system comprises an LED array and the second light system comprises
15 an array of incandescent bulbs.

12. The illumination system of claim 3, further comprising:
an enclosure that surrounds at least a portion of the first and second optical paths, the enclosure including a first wall to which the first side mirror is affixed and a second wall to which the second side mirror is
20 affixed.

13. An illumination system for illuminating indicia on the surface of a substrate, comprising:

a camera having a field of view that is oriented with its longitudinal axis generally perpendicular to a normal to the substrate;

25 first and second arrays of light sources defining optical paths that are respectively disposed to either side of an acute angle defined with respect to a normal to the substrate for illuminating the indicia on the substrate;

a first optical member confronting the first and second arrays
30 of light sources so as to deviate light incident thereto from the first and second arrays of light sources toward the substrate;

a second optical member confronting the substrate so as to deviate light incident thereto from the substrate toward a third optical member, and the third optical member confronting the second optical member so as to deviate light incident thereto from the second optical member toward the camera;

first and second baffles respectively disposed along the optical paths of the first and second arrays of light sources that occlude the respective arrays and thereby prevent them from being imaged onto the second and the third optical members while allowing the indicia to be imaged by the second optical member and deviated therefrom to the third optical member and thence to the camera, allowing it to read the indicia; and

first and second side mirrors extending from a point proximate said first and second arrays of light sources to a point proximate said substrate.

14. The illumination system of claim 11, wherein the indicia of the first type comprise "soft" marks and the indicia of the second type comprise "hard" marks.

15. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein the first light system comprises a first pair of arrays that respectively define an opposing symmetric pair of first optical paths, such that the first optical paths are disposed respectively to either side of an acute angle defined with respect to a normal to the substrate for illuminating the indicia on the substrate.

16. The illumination system of claim 15, wherein the second light system comprises a second pair of arrays that respectively define an opposing symmetric pair of second optical paths, such that the second optical paths are disposed respectively to either side of an acute angle defined with respect to a normal to the substrate for illuminating the indicia on the substrate.

17. The illumination system of claim 1, further comprising:
a camera having a field of view that is oriented with its
longitudinal axis generally perpendicular to a normal to the substrate;

5 a second optical member confronting the substrate so as to
deviate light incident thereto from the substrate toward a third optical
member, and the third optical member confronting the second optical
member so as to deviate light incident thereto from the second optical
member toward the camera; and

10 first and second baffles respectively disposed along the optical
paths of the first and second light sources that occlude the respective light
sources and thereby prevent them from being imaged onto the second and
the third optical members while allowing the indicia to be imaged by the
second optical member and deviated therefrom to the third optical member
and thence to the camera, allowing it to read the indicia.

15 18. The illumination system of claim 7, wherein the camera
has a field of view that is oriented with its longitudinal axis generally
perpendicular to a normal to the substrate.

20 19. The illumination system of claim 7, wherein the camera
has a field of view that is oriented with its longitudinal axis generally
parallel to a normal to the substrate.

20. The illumination system of claim 3, wherein the first and
second mirrors are positioned respectively above and below the light
systems.

25 21. The illumination system of claim 7, further comprising:
an optical member positioned along the first and second
optical paths to deviate light incident to the optical member from the first
and second light systems toward the substrate, such that the first side mirror
is disposed along a portion of the first and second optical paths between the
first light system and the optical member and between the second light
30 system and the optical member, respectively, to direct a portion of the light

from the first and second light systems toward the optical member and from the optical member toward the substrate.

22. The illumination system of claim 1, wherein the first side mirror extends from a point proximate said first and second light systems to a point proximate the substrate.

23. The illumination system of claim 13, wherein the first and second arrays are both LED arrays or both incandescent bulb arrays.

24. The illumination system of claim 13, wherein the first side mirror is spaced apart from the second side mirror by a distance of about 1.5 inches.

25. The illumination system of claim 13, wherein the first and second arrays are both LED arrays, further comprising:

third and fourth arrays of incandescent bulbs for illuminating indicia of a second type, the third and fourth arrays defining second optical paths that are respectively disposed to either side of an acute angle defined with respect to a normal to the substrate, the optical member being positioned along the second optical paths to deviate light incident to the optical member from the third and fourth arrays sources toward the substrate, the first and second side mirrors being respectively disposed along a portion of the second optical paths between the third and fourth arrays and the optical member to direct a portion of the light from the third and fourth arrays toward the optical member and from the optical member toward the substrate.

26. The illumination system of claim 13; wherein the first array has a source width that is normal to the first optical path, the source width having an actual size; wherein the side mirror creates an apparent size for the source width that is greater than the actual size; and wherein the field of view has a view width that is a function of the apparent size of the source width.

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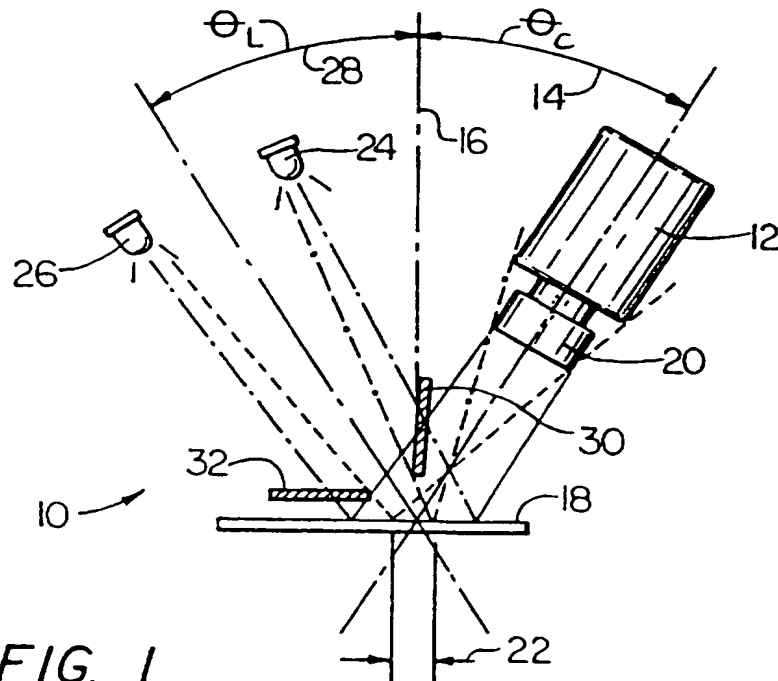


FIG. 1

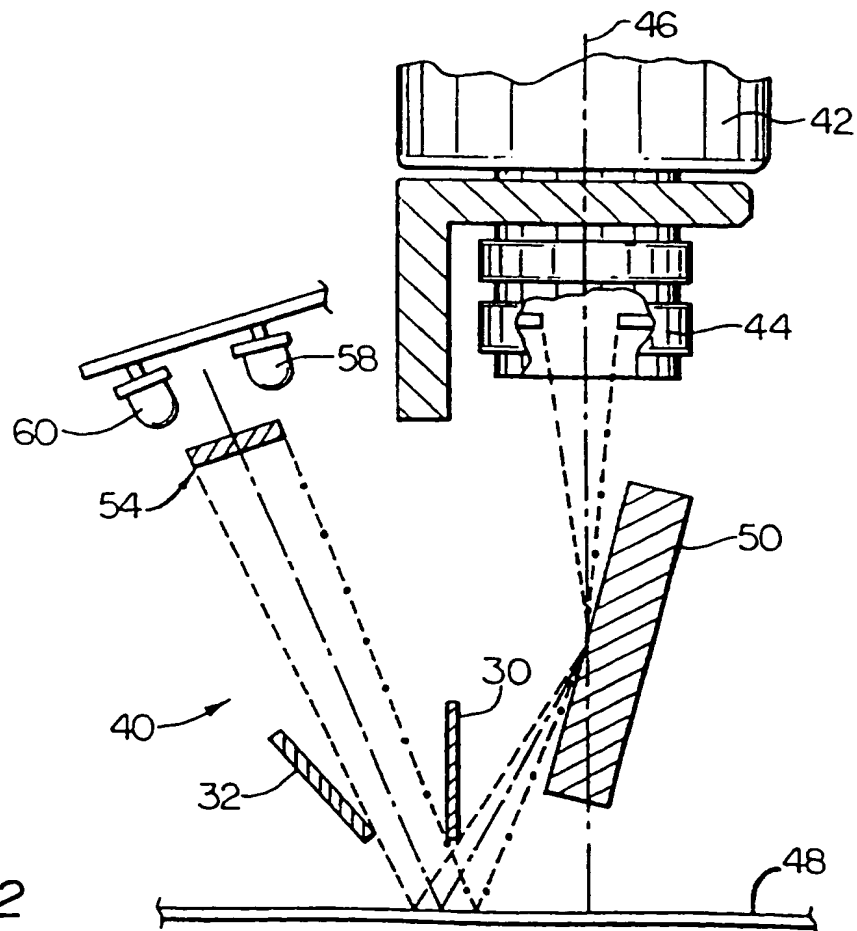


FIG. 2

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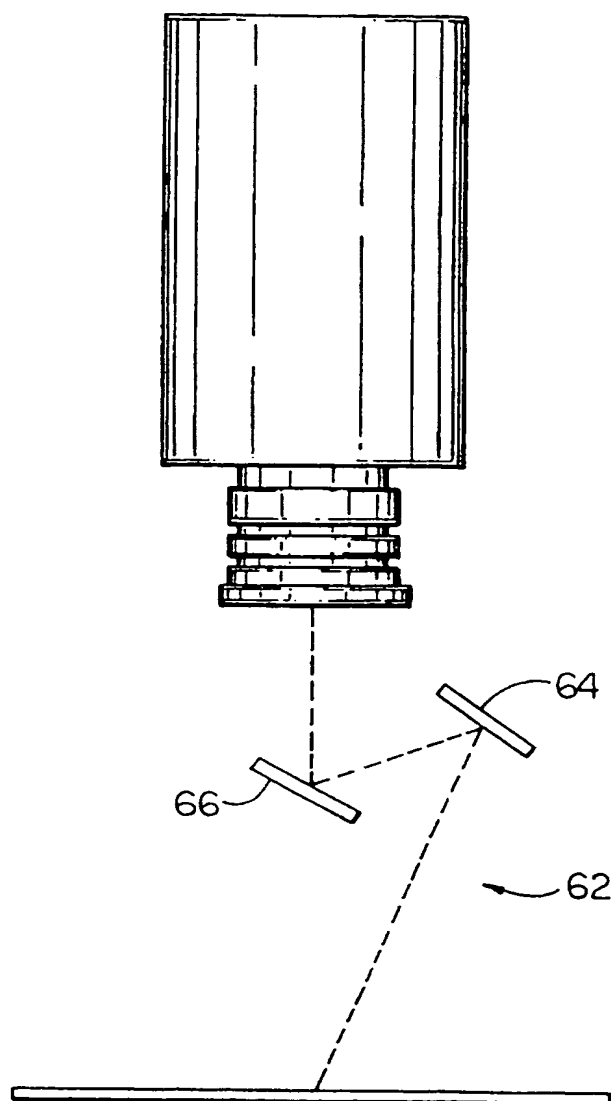


FIG. 3A

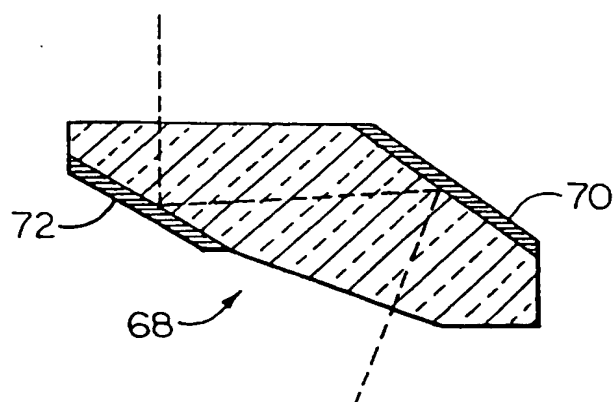


FIG. 3B

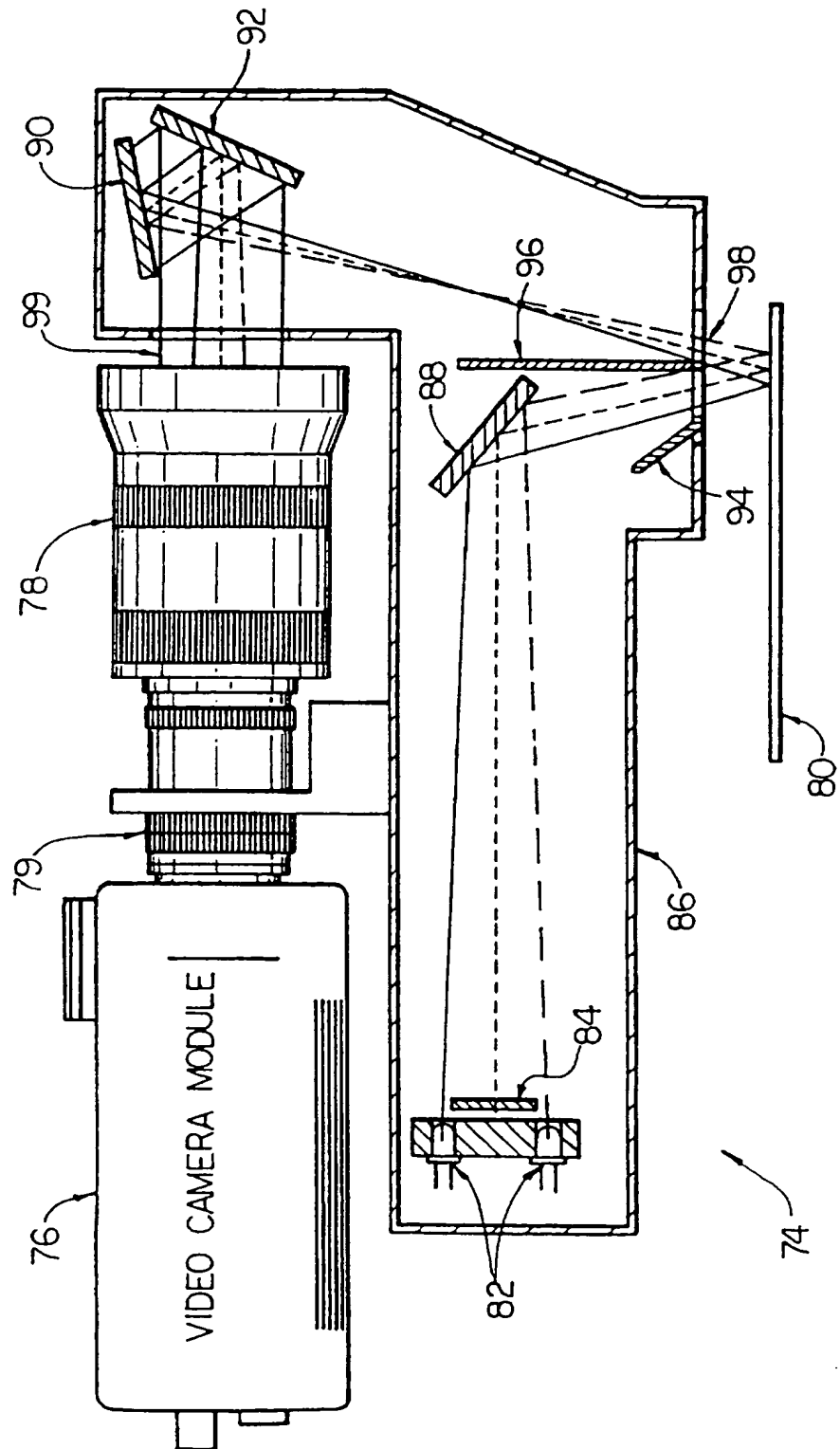
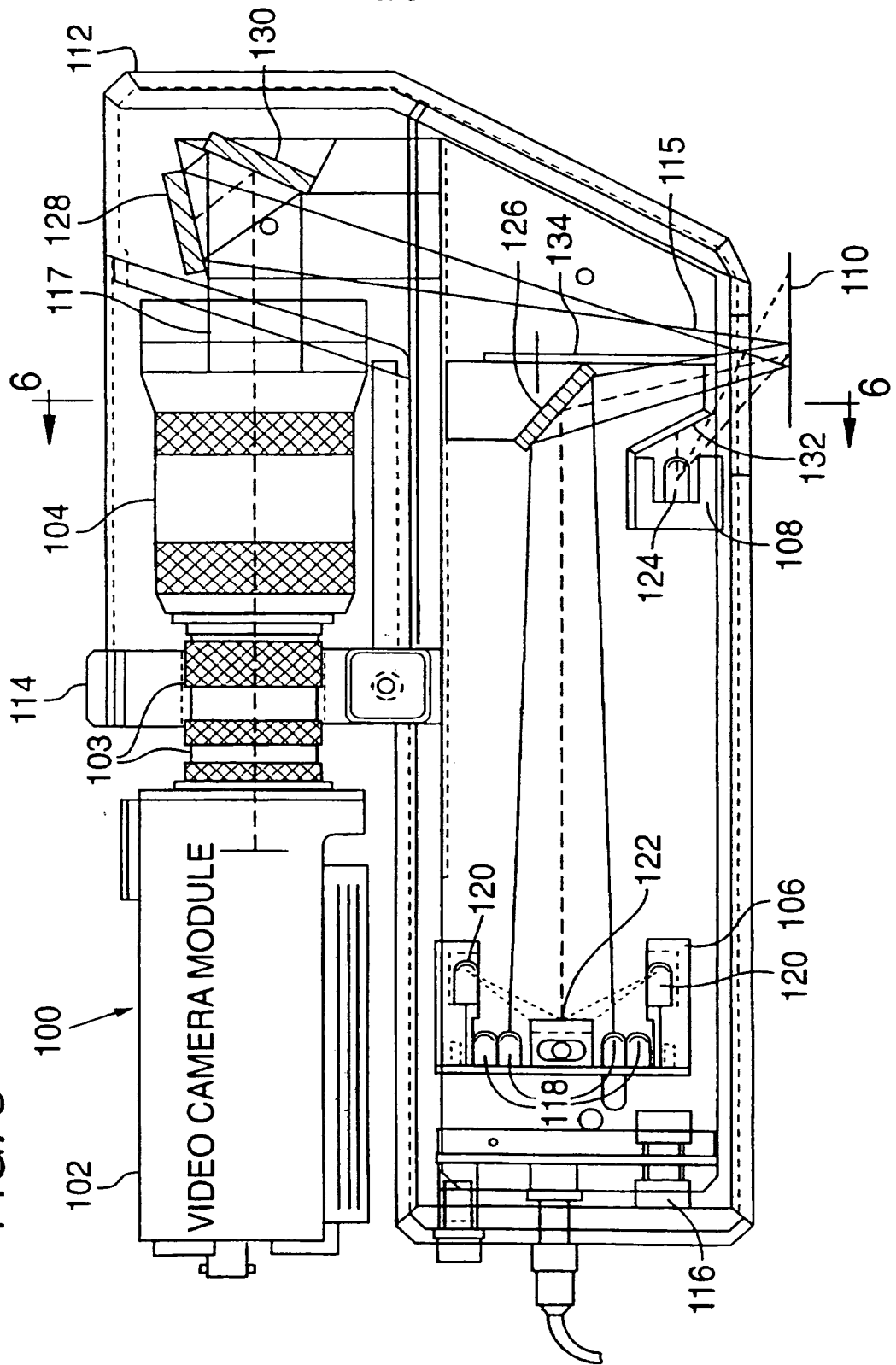


FIG. 4

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FIG. 5



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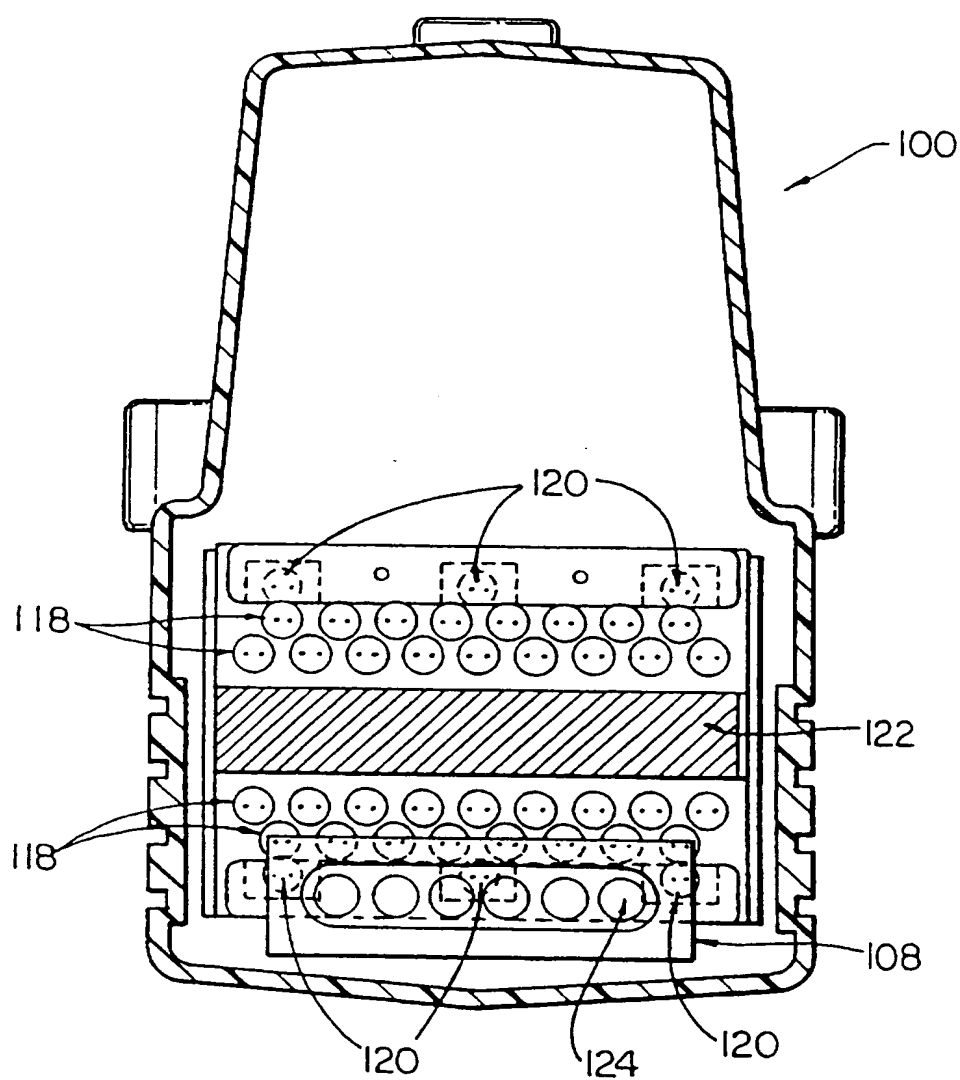


FIG. 6

FIG. 7

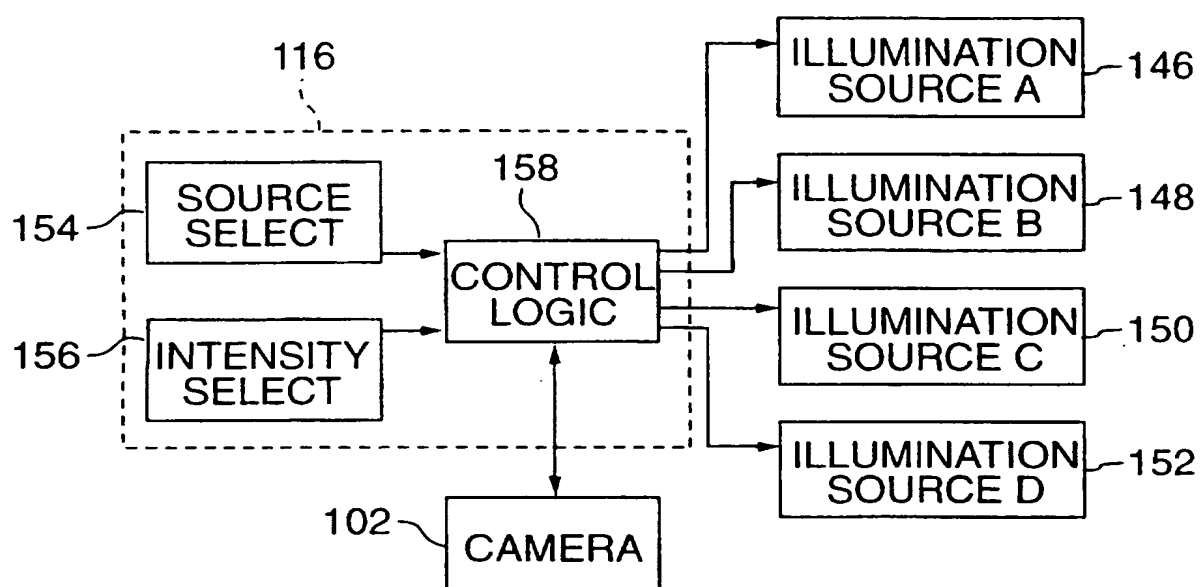
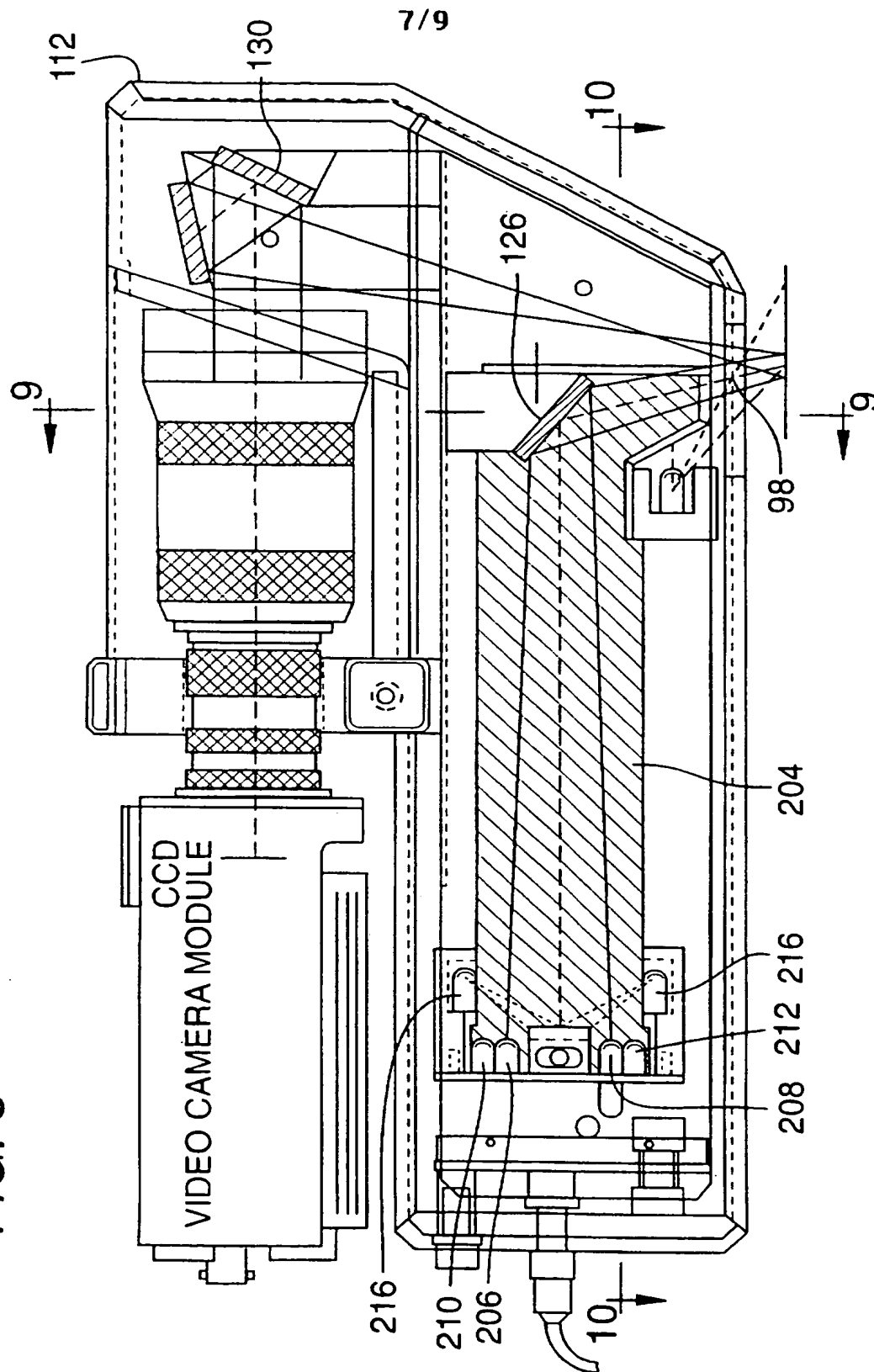
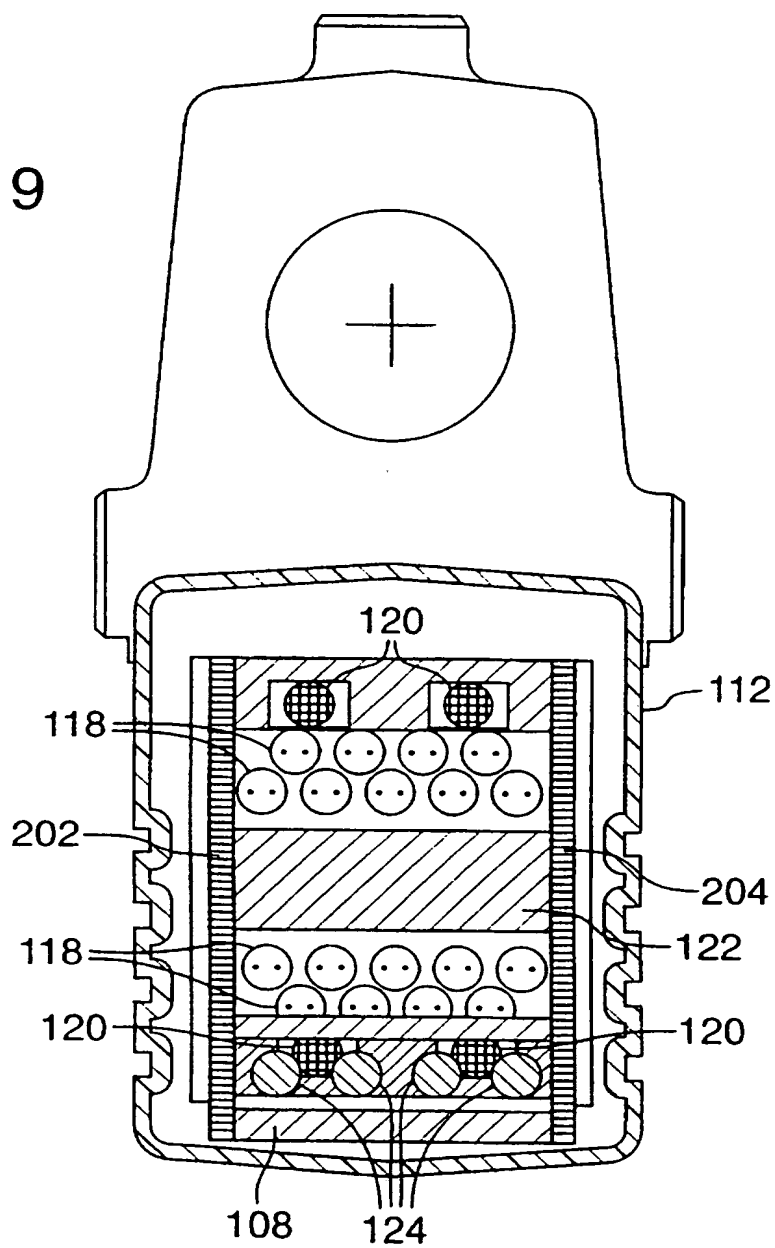


FIG. 8



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FIG. 9



INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

International Application No.
PCT/US 96/18635

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER
IPC 6 G06K7/10 H01L21/00

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC.

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)
IPC 6 G06K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	PATENT ABSTRACTS OF JAPAN vol. 010, no. 254 (P-492), 30 August 1986 & JP 61 080471 A (HAMAMATSU PHOTONICS KK), 24 April 1986, see abstract ---	1-3, 10, 12
P, Y	US 5 469 294 A (WILT DONALD R ET AL) 21 November 1995 see the whole document ---	1-13
Y	IBM TECHNICAL DISCLOSURE BULLETIN, vol. 27, no. 10B, March 1985, NEW YORK, US, pages 6225-6226, XP002025590 ANONYMOUS: "Light Tunnel Illumination Apparatus" see the whole document --- -/--	1-13

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Date of the actual completion of the international search

19 February 1997

Date of mailing of the international search report

07.03.97

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
A	US 5 231 536 A (WILT DONALD R ET AL) 27 July 1993 -----	

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INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

information on patent family members

International Application No

PCT/US 96/18635

Patent document cited in search report	Publication date	Patent family member(s)	Publication date
US-A-5469294	21-11-95	US-A- 5231536	27-07-93
US-A-5231536	27-07-93	US-A- 5469294	21-11-95

Form PCT/ISA/210 (patent family annex) (July 1992)

